

# Budget and Performance Goals

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City continues to move forward in FY05 with an agenda focused on results. Despite the challenges presented by budget reductions in the prior fiscal year, the City proved successful not only in protecting essential services and producing steady results, but also in continuing its work towards improving service delivery and maximizing efficiencies across departments. Cross-departmental and inter-agency collaboration and coordination are a key part of moving the City forward and achieving the results that make Boston city government absolutely the best it can be.

The City's strong program budgeting and performance monitoring system continues to provide a solid base of service level information for understanding the goals and objectives that support the Mayor's core priorities, including providing every child with a quality education, creating affordable housing, lowering the crime rate, revitalizing Boston's neighborhoods and promoting a healthy lifestyle for all City residents. Detailed spending information integrated with

promised levels of service strengthens the tie to accountability for allocated resources.

The City Charter contains legal deadlines and actions that must be followed in adopting the budget. The deadlines and formal actions, as well as the planned dates for the fiscal 2005 budget development process are shown in the table below.

## **CONTINUOUS PLANNING CYCLE**

### ***Budget Development and Approval***

Boston integrates goal setting, program budgeting, monthly performance reporting and financial tracking into a continuous planning and review cycle.

As a starting point in the cycle, departments prepare budgets within the financial parameters established. As such, department managers are responsible for determining what level of service can be supported with available resources.

The mid-year evaluation of current year projected results at this juncture may lead to the refinement of departmental objectives and outcomes intended

<b>Action Required</b>	<b>City Charter</b>	<b>Date</b>
Departments proposed budgets to Budget Office	No requirement	02/09/04
School Superintendent proposed budget to School Committee on or before 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday in February	Chapter 613 Acts of 1987	02/04/04
Mayoral meetings with departments	No requirement	March
School Committee action taken on budget on or before the 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday in March	Chapter 613 Acts of 1987	03/24/04
Mayor's recommended annual budget submitted to the City Council on or before 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in April	Ch.190, Acts of 1982 as amended by Ch.701, Acts of 1986	04/14/04
Public hearings held prior to budget adoption	No requirement	April – June
City Council definite action on recommended budget on or before 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in June	Ch.190, Acts of 1982 as amended by Ch.701, Acts of 1986	06/09/04
Mayor's approval of budget adopted by City Council on or before July 1, 2004 (Fiscal Year 2005)	No requirement	06/30/04

to further the department's mission in the ensuing year. By redesigning processes to increase operational efficiency or realigning programs to enhance service delivery, the City adapts itself to the diverse needs of its citizenry.

Funding requests and projected service delivery outcomes are informed by prior year results and help frame a series of policy discussions held with the Mayor. Tradeoffs under alternative service delivery options may be analyzed, with the end result a recommended budget submitted to the City Council for public deliberation.

The final approved budget marks the Mayor's commitment to provide the citizens of Boston with a comprehensive plan to deliver quality services at the highest possible level.

### ***Budget Accountability***

Budget implementation follows City Council approval. Financial and operational performance is monitored on an ongoing basis via monthly revenue and expenditure variance reports and the Boston About Results (BAR) program (described below) to ensure accountability for performance. Mayoral policy meetings are held mid-year to take a comprehensive look at front-line agency performance to ensure that departmental strategy is proving effective in the context of actual results.

### ***Department Performance Measures***

Managers cannot manage what they cannot measure. Monitoring performance entails an emphasis on identifying appropriate methods for measuring the success or failure of programs to realize Mayoral priorities. In an era of constrained growth, the sustainability of programs may be jeopardized if resources allocated are not yielding positive returns. It also means tracking and monitoring performance over time and using this information to reassess operations, ensuring the continuation of quality service. For example, in reviewing the functional overlap between the Public Works and Transportation departments, three areas have been identified to consolidate within the coming year: pavement markings, traffic signals, and streetlights. Performance indicators in these areas will be closely monitored throughout the year to determine the full service impact of the consolidation and improved efficiencies.

Performance measures are developed as part of the planning process and are derived from the mission, goals and objectives identified by each department, with the emphasis always on serving the department's customers. Performance measurement becomes the language that gives clarity to program objectives, drives decision-making and focuses the appropriation process on outcomes. Analyzing cause and effect throughout the year provides valuable information used in improving everyday program management.

### ***Boston About Results (BAR)***

Citizens entrust government with the responsibility of using their tax dollars wisely. We are constantly challenging ourselves to improve how we deliver services, so that city government is the best it can be. In FY03, an improved tool to monitor performance was unveiled to strengthen the City's ability to focus on results. Boston About Results represents a citywide commitment to report, review, and analyze performance data that is relevant, timely, and reliable. Performance data entered monthly is available immediately for management and analyst review. Utilizing technology greatly enhances the City's capabilities to track and analyze emerging trends that may pose additional challenges during the year. Coupled with access to the Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline, timely information provides the opportunity to realign resources where necessary in order to continue to meet set goals.

As Boston About Results and performance measurement in general have become more tightly integrated in the financial, management, and policy planning of departments, the Mayor is poised to harness the momentum these tools have afforded the City by establishing Neighborhood Response Teams (NRT). Neighborhood Response Teams represent a cross-departmental, coordinated effort to improve the provision of basic services by utilizing new communication forums to address neighborhood-specific issues. Information flow is streamlined as Neighborhood Response Teams coordinate dialogue across all departments. Teams are comprised of a core representation from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Transportation, Parks and Recreation,

Inspectional Services, and the Police Department – representatives from other agencies, such as Fire or Licensing, will be asked to attend meetings whenever applicable. Weekly discussions focus on the request, prioritization, and delivery of services, and are informed by data from the Mayor's 24 Hour Constituent Service Hotline. Follow-up on the results from these activities ties back into the Hotline and the Boston About Results system to track, analyze, and continue to improve the City's response to citizen concerns.

One issue that may be addressed in the Neighborhood Response Team forum is tree-trimming. While requests for this service will continue to be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department, the NRT format will allow for information-sharing and work-coordination behind the scenes among those departments that are directly – or indirectly – impacted by this neighborhood concern. Overgrown trees have the potential to negatively affect street-lighting and lead to public safety concerns. Bringing Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Police to the table creates an opportunity to assess and address issues quickly and efficiently.

### ***Continuous Service Delivery Improvement***

The City continues to identify opportunities for efficiencies and to sustain the momentum that positive change can provide. Restructuring and refining government is an iterative process that overlaps budget cycles. The City has already taken measures to improve on the structure and responsiveness of government. Some of the measures under consideration or already taken are as follows:

- The Mayor's commitment to advancing the positive results that stem from citizen's participation in the City's vibrant arts and cultural scene is strengthened with the creation of a new department, the Mayor's Office of the Arts and Cultural Development. The Office represents the alignment of cultural activities in the City of Boston and is newly created in FY05 by combining the resources of the Office of Cultural Affairs and the Office of Special Events, Tourism & Film. The Office of the Arts and Cultural Development presents an opportunity for the City to improve

coordination around all events that add cultural value to the City as well as heighten the visibility of and focus efforts on promoting the City's art and cultural resources.

- As efforts to refine the Streets, Transportation & Sanitation structure move forward, three areas have been identified to consolidate within the coming year: pavement markings, traffic signals and streetlights. The Street Lights and Signals program will maintain approximately 10,000 traffic signal heads at 800 signalized intersections and 65,000 streetlights. Staff will be cross-trained so that the department can deploy resources in a more efficient manner. As a single unit, functional overlaps – in street lights and signals, and in knockdown emergency situations – will be eliminated and enable service to be provided more efficiently.
- Combining public and private resources to strengthen and expand after-school opportunities for Boston's students, the Mayor's 2:00-6:00 After-School Initiative is merged with Boston's After-School for All Partnership to launch a new organization for the City's after-school sector.
- The regionalization model introduced by Boston Centers for Youth and Families in the prior fiscal year is further enhanced in FY05 with a coordinated partnership effort among community centers, for-profit businesses, not-for-profit agencies, faith-based groups, and residents organized around key initiatives, e.g. youth employment, child care, financial literacy, etc. This is a new initiative, piloted in FY05 within two regions, that will formalize existing alliances and further enrich neighborhood-building goals as BCYF and its partner agencies work towards effectively and efficiently utilizing all existing resources to deliver a complement of programs and other services that is responsive to neighborhood needs, sustainable, and focused on results.

